



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

THE
MORTE
STONE



600073856Z





THREE DEVONSHIRE SKETCHES.



THE MORTE STONE;

OR,

CAUTION AND COUNSEL.

BY

EBENEZER WILMSHURST

With several Illustrations.



LONDON:

HOULSTON AND SONS, 7, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS.

1882.

251. q. 564.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY W. H. AND L. COLLINGRIDGE,
ALDERSGATE STREET, E.C.



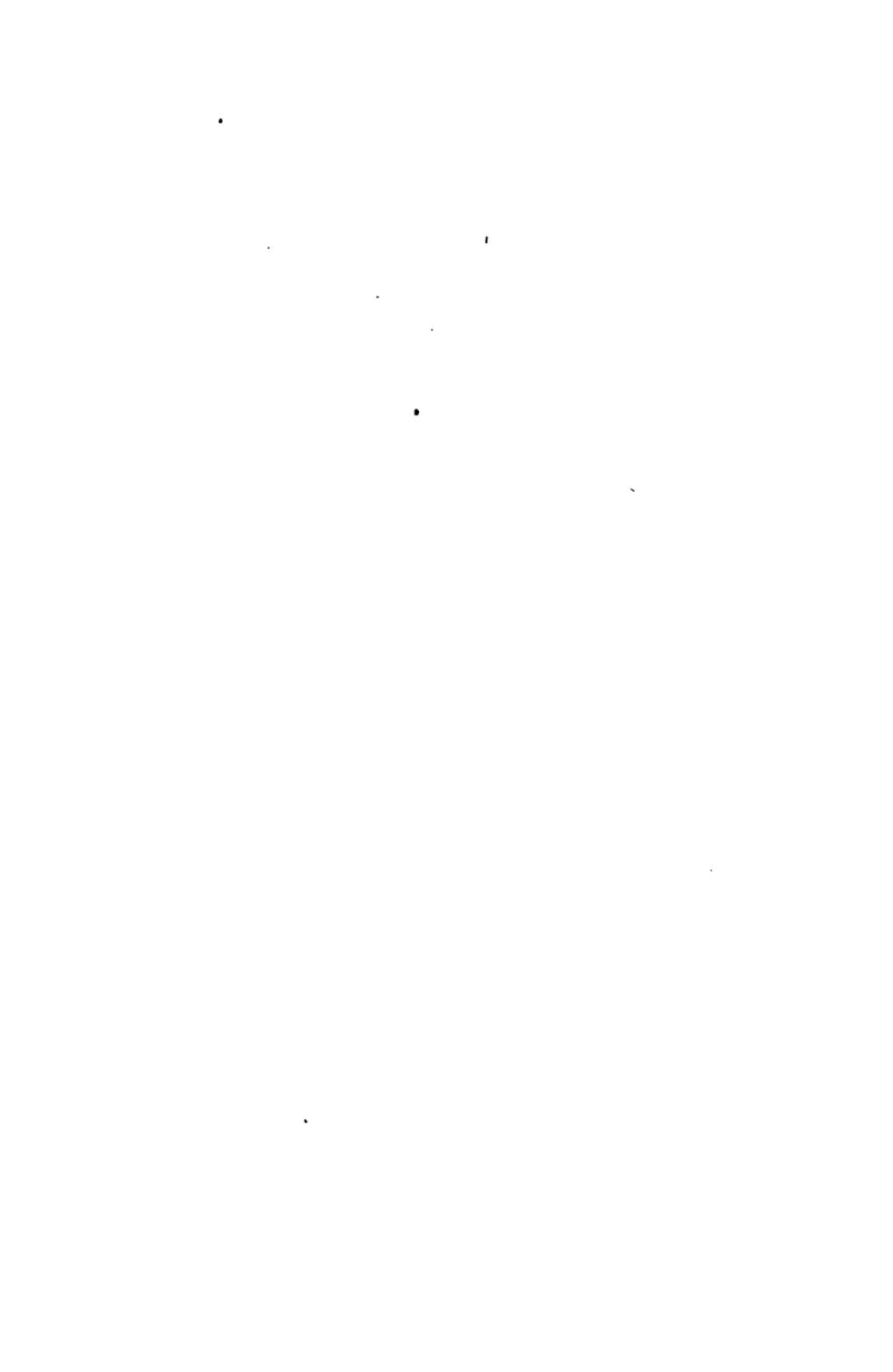
P R E F A C E.

MANY pleasant half-hours have been spent in speaking to young friends who assemble together on the Sabbath.

The substance of some of these friendly talks are now collected and issued in a volume.

May the caution and counsel contained therein be found profitable to many others, besides those for whose benefit they were originally intended.







C O N T E N T S.

	PAGE
THE MORTE STONE (<i>Frontispiece</i>)	1
"IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?" (<i>Illustrated</i>)	33
GREAT SIGHTS (<i>Illustrated</i>)	53
ON THE WATCH	65
JEWELS (<i>Illustrated</i>)	75
"LITTLE FOXES" (<i>Illustrated</i>)	97
YOUNG TIMOTHY	107
GIANTS (<i>Illustrated</i>)	117





THE MORTE STONE.

DURING a visit to the coast of North Devon we visited a place called Morthoe. It was so named by the ancient Normans on account of a very dangerous rock, called the **Morte Stone** (the Death Stone), which lies out in the sea some quarter of a mile from the shore. That the spot is very dangerous, and the stone deserves the remarkable name which it has gained, the wreck of many a gallant ship, and the loss of numerous precious lives abundantly testify.

A lighthouse has been erected upon Bull Point, a prominent headland adjoining this dangerous spot. During our visit here we

took care to go and view the lighthouse, and we were deeply interested in all we saw.

The bold coast line, with its grand yet fearful precipices on each side of Bull Point, first attracted our attention ; and these alone showed abundant reason why a lighthouse was needed in such a spot, even if the dreaded Morte Stone had not been there, but there it was, in very deed, with the calm summer's sea washing its white foam all around it, and showing only too plainly what a terrible spot it must be when the sea is raging in its fury.

A lighthouse at any point round the coast is always an interesting place to visit, and Bull Point proved no exception to the rule. The head keeper very politely conducted us over it, and gave us all the information in his power. We were shown the powerful lantern and its beautiful fittings. Round the lamp was placed a framework of revolving glass, which had the double effect of magnifying the light and of causing it to give three flashes, after which a pause occurs of several seconds, and then the flashes are again repeated, which are continued at like intervals throughout the night. By this means the mariners know which lighthouse it is, and do not mistake it for any other along the coast.

In addition to the lantern there is also a red light shining out of the side of the lighthouse towards the Morte Stone, which when the sailors catch sight of they know they are too near this dangerous rock, and at once go out farther till they lose sight of the danger signal, and then they know they are on a safe course, and giving the fatal stone the wide berth that it deserves.

Sometimes it so happens that, owing to the dense fog that hangs over the Channel, neither lantern nor red light can be seen; then recourse is had to the fog horn, which is so arranged as to give three blasts answering in time to the flashes of the lantern. To blow this horn there are two compressed air engines, one of which is always kept ready charged, so that when occasion requires, it can be set to work in a few minutes, and, lest anything should happen to the horn, a new one is kept in readiness for use should it be needed.

In considering all this care, expense, and trouble which is taken by the authorities in the erection and maintenance of this lighthouse, for the sole purpose of keeping poor storm-driven mariners from being dashed to pieces on the Death Stone, we are forcibly reminded of the extreme danger of the spot, and are led to

think of other death-stones upon which landsmen, as well as sailors, have cause to fear being wrecked.

Our lives may fitly be compared to a *voyage*, with all its dangers and uncertainties. Some have but a short passage from the cradle to the grave, and if others have their journey lengthened out to the threescore years and ten spoken of by the Psalmist, yet do their days fly away like a weaver's shuttle. How numerous are the dangers which beset the voyager all through life's journey! and happy should he be counted who is preserved from being wrecked upon some fatal "death-stone," which lies directly in his course.

Four only of these "death-stones" have we space here to mention:—

First there is the "*Death-stone of Infidelity*." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." We quite endorse the remark of a little girl when reading this passage, who said, "Well, a man must be a fool who says that." But, alas! how many there are who declare this openly by their words, while hosts of others say the same thing by their actions. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handywork," and that man must be wilfully blind who cannot behold the count-

less footsteps of God in this vast creation with which he is surrounded, let alone in the numberless blessings of God's providence which hour by hour they receive at His hands.

An infidel once placed on a board over his sick bed, "God is no where." His little girl, happening to come into the room to see her father, told him that she was learning to read. To test her abilities, he told her to read what was written on the board. The child at once spelt "God is now here." The simple mistake of his child, in wrongly placing one letter, went like a dagger to the sick man's heart, and was the means of convincing him of the error of his ways, and leading him to forsake his fearful infidel notions, which would otherwise have proved a "death-stone" to his soul.

Sin is the second "death-stone;" and under this name we include every form of wickedness that is done under the sun. We see the budding of sin only too plainly in childhood, while vast crops of evil are brought forth in riper years. Sin is indeed a bitter-sweet, yet how it sparkles in the eyes of man. Achan, when charged with taking of the accursed thing, made a confession which might be called the sliding-scale of sin. "I *saw*," "I *coveted*," "and *took*." Thus it is with all

who fall into sin. The golden bait hides the piercing hook which drags many an unwary sinner to certain destruction. Truly, the way of transgressors is hard. Of this we had a sad instance come under our notice a few months back.

A young man who was an assistant in a business house was suspected of robbing his employer. A trap was laid for him, which resulted in some marked money being found upon him. When taken before the magistrate he pleaded earnestly for mercy, but he was sentenced to two months imprisonment. Shortly afterwards he was seized with a fit in his cell. His young wife, to whom he had not long been united, was sent for. To hear that her husband was ill, and in a felon's cell, caused her to faint away, and when she sufficiently recovered and reached the gaol, it was but to find him dead—wrecked upon the death-stone of sin.

The third death-stone is that of *Pleasure*. Like the child Passion in the “Pilgrim's Progress,” how many love their good things in this life, and are quite unwilling to wait for those which are to come! We cannot begin to define all the follies which prove attractive to the lovers of pleasure, and in which they promise themselves untold happiness, but which,

however, they never find. The theatre, the race-course, the ball-room, the wine-glass, the gambling-table, and the trashy novel, with many other so-called pleasures—each and all have numerous devotees ; and almost as well might we try to stop a rapid in its course as a fool who is bent upon folly.

A young man who was climbing the Swiss mountains with a guide was attracted by a beautiful bunch of flowers growing on the side of a fearful precipice ; he at once started to obtain them, “Come back,” said his guide again and again, “you are going to certain danger.” He called but in vain ; he heard the youth say, “I shall have them in a minute,” and immediately after, “I have got them.” But at that moment he lost his foot-hold, and was dashed headlong to a certain death on the rocks a thousand feet below. A life lost for a flower ! Oh, foolish youth ! Yet stay—he was not more foolish than thousands of others, who risk their health, their wealth and their souls to obtain some pleasure which in itself is even more worthless than a flower.

Evil Company is the fourth and last of the death-stones to which we now intend to refer. This rock is exceedingly dangerous, and the current washing round it is so strong, that

when once drawn into the eddies the victim is carried along to almost certain ruin. How true is the fact “that one sinner destroyeth much good”! He not only loves wrong himself, but endeavours to infect others with his folly. Better would it be, in many instances, to live in the midst of some dire contagious disease than with a wicked man ; one might attack the body, but the other strikes even at the soul.

A boy in Glasgow stayed snow-balling in the streets instead of going to the Sunday-school. He fell in with evil company and was induced to help rob a house ; his footsteps were traced in the snow, and he, with others, was sent to prison. Thus, step by step, he went the downward course, till he died upon the gallows. Truly, evil company is a death-stone in more than name.

We come now to refer to the Lighthouse, which is to keep voyagers off the “Death Stone ;” and here we may gather some instruction as to the provision which God has made to warn sinners of the dangers which mark their course.

The lantern with its three flashes, which is continued night after night, forcibly reminds us of the flashing *light of conscience*, which is placed in the heart of every child that enters

this world, and which tells so true that by its light even a savage or a Hottentot can tell right from wrong, and good from evil. But conscience needs to be treated with as much tender care as we should bestow upon the delicate works of a watch, otherwise it will get out of order, and may be so injured in its working power as to become useless to the possessor. Wise are they who at all times and places observe the most gentle glimmer from the light of conscience ; by so doing they will certainly escape many of the death-stones which abound in their path.

A working man, when asked how his conscience allowed him to work on Sunday, replied "that he was too poor to keep a conscience." By-and-by he became poorer still, and found no one would employ him. "I don't know how it is," said the man one day to a neighbour, "you have always worked six days in the week while I have worked seven, yet you are the best off." "That," said his companion, "is because I have kept a conscience, and that has kept me."

The *red light* placed at the side of the light-house to point out the very position of the Death Stone may be compared to the *Word of God*. "Thy Word," saith the Psalmist, "is a

lamp to my feet and a light to my path." If it was so in his day, when not half the Bible was written, it is still more the case now that the Word of God is complete. Every death-stone is there boldly marked, and every safe passage so clearly defined, that even they that run may read. Yea, and so that all should know the contents of this Word, His ministers are almost day by day proclaiming it, as it were, from the very house-top, so that all should hear it.

A little girl, when on a dying-bed, drew out from under the pillow her precious Bible, and, giving it to her brother, she said, "Keep this for my sake, but remember it is God's Book. I am sure of this, because it has taught me the way to Heaven. It has been a lovely light to me on earth, but I am going where I shall want it no more, for the Lord Himself and the Lamb will give me light for ever."

But we have still a lesson to learn from the fog horn, which is used when sailors are enveloped in mist.

Through the deceitfulness of their hearts, men often neglect both the flashings of conscience and the bright light of God's Word; but that they shall hear God sends His *judgments* upon the earth (which may be

called His fog horn); and so loud is the blast that some of the stoutest hearts have been made to tremble. None, perhaps, stood out more boldly against God's judgments than did Pharoah of old; but terrible were the calamities that came upon his land, his people, his firstborn, and lastly upon himself, for rebellion against the Most High; and these events should proclaim to all that none can harden themselves against God and prosper. When Jonah proclaimed the coming judgments of God through the streets of Nineveh, his trumpet note was heard by all classes of men, from the king to the peasant, and such good heed did they give to his warnings by repentance, fasting, and prayer, that God turned away his threatened judgments and spared the city. Well will it be for all hardened sinners if they are enabled to bow before God's judgments, like the Ninevites, rather than go on in their sins, like Pharoah, and be cut off by the power of the Almighty.

A ship, when on its voyage, is powerless to escape the dangers in its course and proceed safely to its destination without a propelling power; but for this it would be drifted helplessly upon some death-stone, regardless of all warnings that might be placed to prevent

them. In some cases steam is the power used, but in numerous instances it is the wind of heaven that fills the sails and wafts the vessel on its course. Thus it is with all mariners who launch forth to sail heavenward. They need the Holy Spirit (which is compared to wind, John iii. 8) to start them, and to waft them *forward* on their voyage; otherwise none would ever start, much less would they continue in the course till the haven of eternal rest is reached.

But ships need also a helm to guide them in the proper *direction*. So, in the heart of every Christian voyager, God implants a *holy fear*, which may fitly be compared to a helm, and is the means of guiding him safely through every shoal, quicksand, or whirlpool which would otherwise prove fatal to him. This "holy fear" was a golden monitor in the heart of young Joseph, in Egypt, when tempted to sin, and led him to say, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

" Happy are they that fear the Lord,
Who from the paths of sin depart ;
Rejoice and tremble at His Word,
And hide it deep within their hearts."

Every mariner who makes this heavenly

voyage will have to travel through the storms, straits, and seas that are mapped out in the Word of God, the only course by which the port of eternal rest can be attained. No sooner does he start on his heavenly voyage than the *storms of conviction* come down upon him with great force. It is true that upon some they fall with greater fury than upon others; but even those who meet them in their mildest form find it hard work to make headway through them, and are beset with thousands of fears that they shall sink beneath them, while those who meet the full force of the blast are so bowed beneath it that they can see nothing before them but black despair. The storms raised by conviction for sin are no child's play. Let those who may think differently look at Saul, struck down on his road to Damascus, and crying out in the bitterness of his feeling to that Jesus whom he had persecuted, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Or at the Philippian jailor, in the dead of night, making the gloomy prison-cell ring with the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Or at Martin Luther, pacing the Convent of Erfurt, and breathing out from his very soul, "My sins, my sins, my sins!" Surely such instances as these,

of which thousands might be mentioned, are sufficient to prove that those who meet with the storms of conviction can only weather them by receiving power from on high.

After those storms, the mariner, if guided by the Holy Spirit, will pass into the *Straits of Repentance*. This is a sorrowful passage, and the scene of great mourning for sin. Each repentant one seeks to be much alone, that he may meditate on his condition, while (though often with broken language) he tells the Lord his case, and searches His Word diligently, to see if there can be any salvation for him. But presently the horizon grows brighter, a little “Who can tell?” like a gentle breeze, springs up, so that the troubled soul is encouraged to press forward, with hope lingering in his soul that he shall yet reach the goal that his heart is set upon.

Passing out of the Straits of Repentance the mariner sights the *Cape of Good Hope*, which sends a thrill of expectation through his heart, because he now feels that his case is not past all help. He calls to remembrance the power of One who is mighty to save. He thinks, too, of the gracious promises that are recorded for the encouragement of sin-burdened souls; and

such is the power of attraction in Jesus, the sinner's Hope, and such the promptings towards Him in the troubled one's own soul, that we might sooner stop the needle flying to a powerful magnet than prevent Jesus Christ and a truly repentant sinner coming together.

Then for a season does the storm-tossed mariner find rest—yea, peace and joy in believing.

Many are the storms of afflictions, and hurricanes of temptation, as well as bays of delight and comfort, through which Christian mariners have to sail in their homeward-bound journey; but, knowing in Whom they have believed, they can truly and sweetly sing—

“ We can brave the wintry ocean,
Each tumultuous storm defy ;
Calm amidst tempestuous motion,
Knowing that the Lord is nigh ;
Waves obey Him,
And the storms before Him fly.

“ Rendered safe by His protection,
We shall pass the watery waste ;
Trusting in His wise direction,
We shall gain the port at last ;
And with wonder
Think on toils and dangers past.”

It is usual for ships to *carry their colours*, that all who see them may know at a glance to what nation they belong, and very few are the tars who do not dearly love the flag of their native clime ; and should it not be the delight of the Christian mariner to show forth to the world Whose he is, and Whom he serves ? We can but feel that many a soldier and sailor, in the devotion they show to their king or queen, put to the blush the lukewarm service of many who profess to serve the King of kings.

It is said that on one occasion, when some troops were attacking a fortress, a young ensign, with the colours in his hand, leaped the trench in the face of a heavy fire and placed them on the wall. “ Bring back the colours ! ” shouted the captain, fearing they would be lost. “ Never ! ” replied the noble fellow, “ bring the soldiers to the colours.” This was eventually done, and the victory gained, almost entirely owing to the brave example of the young ensign. Who can tell the force of example ? Oh, for grace to stand forth boldly in this day of worldliness and superstition ! to leap the trench in the face of the bitterest shafts from the enemies of God and truth, willing to die for the faith, but

never, through shame or cowardice, to strike our colours to please either friend or foe !

“ Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend
On whom my hopes for Heaven depend ;
No ! when I blush be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name.”

We cannot too often remember the words of Christ, “ He that confesseth Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven ; but whosoever denieth Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in heaven.”

We have now to touch upon the *end* of life’s voyage, and, in doing so, we must refer both to those who make shipwreck upon some death-stone, and to those who sail safely into Heaven’s fair harbour.

During our visit to Devon we were anxious to see the sun set over the sea, having heard that it was a sight worth beholding. The evening after our arrival we climbed a high peak, in order to have a good view of the scene, but to our great disappointment the sun went down behind a dense mass of black clouds. This continued to be the case every evening till the last night we were there, when, to our delight, the clouds cleared away

and the sun went down majestically right into the ocean, brilliantly lighting up the waters as it did so, till presently the last spark went out as if it had been drowned in the Atlantic. But long after the glorious orb had departed the glow around the horizon was not only beautiful to behold, but served to remind us forcibly of the departed luminary.

May we not see in one of these sunsets a figure of the wicked who end their life here in darkness, and in the other a type of the righteous, whose death is but the beginning of glory ? The one goes down like the sun behind clouds, nothing but blackness and sadness to be seen in their departure ; while, on the other hand, when the Christian dies, such a glory often attends his departure from this life, that those who behold the scene often pray, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like theirs." The wicked, too, pass away and are quickly forgotten, but not so the righteous, for " the memory of the just is blessed." " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them ; " thus they leave behind them a bright reflection, which not only reminds us of their departure, but serves to encourage us to follow in their footsteps even as they followed Christ.

The *goal* which every Christian mariner hopes to gain is the *Port of Heaven*, but who can describe the glories that await them in that peaceful haven of eternal rest?

Some parts of this lower world are truly beautiful, and seem to defy all efforts to describe them either by pen or pencil. We felt this especially to be the case on more than one occasion during our visit to the delightful neighbourhood of North Devon.

Upon one occasion we visited the beautiful valley of the Lee, and as we stood on the hill-side, looking down on the picture before us, we were enraptured by the scene. In front of us could be seen sparkling waterfalls, well-kept gardens with delightful hedge-rows of fuchsias, and many a pretty villa or cottage peeped out from beneath the shady trees, while a wooded slope formed a pleasing and suitable back-ground, and upon our right could be seen the broad Atlantic glistening and rippling in the brilliant sunshine.

This charming variety all conspired to form a lovely scene which becomes photographed upon the beholder's brain, and, although the memory of it may be dimmed by time, yet it can never really be forgotten.

Upon another occasion we spent a pleasant hour in the beautiful valley of the West Lyn, at Lynmouth, and as we traversed its winding paths, crossing and recrossing from side to side by means of numerous rustic bridges, new beauties seemed to unfold themselves at every step.

The Lyn river was ever rushing, dashing, and whirling over and around the numerous rocks and crags with which its bed is studded as it urged its headlong course towards the sea below. Now it formed a miniature Niagara, its beautiful fall sparkling in the sunshine, forcibly reminding us of the "Water clear as crystal" spoken of in the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

Then some bold obstruction would divide the river into two branches, which almost immediately re-united again, forming a delightful series of eddying rapids.

Glancing away from the beautiful waterfall upon the wooded scenery on either side of the valley, the visitor again falls into sincere admiration as he beholds the banks clothed with beautiful ferns and shrubs, while ivy-covered trees form a rich canopy of living green; and the glancing sunlight, playing in and out amidst the leaves trembling in the

breeze, gives a charming brilliancy to the whole scene.

But not even these beautiful valleys are free from the blight which sin has brought upon the world. As we passed through the valley of the Lee, our hearts were pained at the sight of a young man sitting in a garden, evidently in the last stages of consumption. His mother told with loving sorrow what a fine fellow he used to be, pointing with pride to his likeness on the wall, taken when he was well and strong, which fully bore out all that she said of him ; but now he was gradually fading away without any hope of his recovery. Truly, we felt that death, the effects of sin, had marred the beauties of this valley.

A few days before we visited the valley of the West Lyn, a young woman had been drowned in that very river which we had so much admired.

Thus all the beauties of creation have a sombre background, caused by the curse which has come upon the world through sin.

But in the Port of Heaven there shall be no more sin, no more death, and no more pain. Nothing shall mar the beauty of that country ; and no shade of sorrow shall pass over any brow, but all shall bask in the sushine of eternal

glory, as they swell the immortal song, ascribing, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.”







IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?



IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?

SOME time ago, while sitting in my counting-house, I saw a policeman enter the shop and heard him ask if I was at home. Perhaps some of my young readers would be very frightened if a policeman came to their house and asked for them by name, especially if conscience told them they had been doing wrong; but, if we have a good conscience, we shall be able to look even a policeman in the face without fear, for they are only a terror to evildoers.

Now, although I was not afraid of the policeman who asked for me, I could not help feeling that something sad had happened, and sad

indeed was the story he quickly told me. A poor woman had fallen down a flight of stone steps with a child in her arms, and the dear little babe was dead, and therefore an inquest must be held, which he requested me to attend as one of the jury. Presently I was taken to see the poor child's body, and oh, what a solemn sight it was, for "behold, the child was dead!"

I once saw a sight that seemed far more painful than this ; for, when walking up one of the streets in London, I saw a little child run across the road just as a heavy dust-cart came along at a smart trot. In a moment the little one was overtaken, knocked down by the horse and crushed by the heavy wheel. Oh, what a feeling of horror came over me, for "behold, the child was dead!"

Thinking on these sad events, a striking circumstance, mentioned in the Bible, came to my mind :—

A little boy was on one occasion taken by his father into the corn-fields to see the reapers. No doubt for some time he was very happy, playing about in the fields, when presently he cried out, "Father, my head! my head!" As the child seemed very ill, his father called a lad and told him to carry the child to his mother.

No doubt this good woman was greatly troubled to see her dear and only son brought home so ill. Oh, how tenderly she watched over and nursed him on her knee till noon, when lo, he died! Oh, what sorrow filled the dear mother's heart, to think that never more should she hear his merry prattle; those little arms would never again cling round her neck; no more would those little lips kiss her with the kiss of love. The sunbeam of the house was gone, for "behold, the child was dead." In her trouble the poor mother remembered a prophet of the Lord who had often visited her house; so, leaving her child, she went and told him her trouble.

When the prophet saw her coming, he sent his servant to ask her three questions, "Is it well with thee?" "Is it well with thy husband?" "Is it well with the child?" and the sorrowing mother replied, "It is well."

How cheering it would be if every bereaved parent could feel when a son or daughter has passed from them into eternity, "It is well with my child"!

The prophet was greatly touched by the good woman's trouble, and at once followed her home. "And when Elisha was come into the house, behold the child was dead and laid upon his bed." Having closed the door, the prophet

36 "IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?"

prayed earnestly to his heavenly Father. Oh, what a wonderful thing is prayer, for, in answer to that petition, God raised the child to life. Who can picture the mother's joy, as once again she beheld her child alive, and with a heart full of gratitude, clasped him to her bosom?

There are no prophets on earth now, to raise the dead to life. There are none now that return to earth from death's dark valley. And who knows how soon it may be said of one of my young readers, "Behold, the child is dead."

" Pause then, my soul, and say,
If I should die to day,
What is my case ? "

Seeing, then, that life is so uncertain even with the young, how important was one of those pointed questions put to the Shunamite by the prophet's servant, "*Is it well with the child?*" In the following pages we will try to answer this question; first, by showing the child with whom "*it is not well,*" and, secondly, "*the child with whom it is well.*"

Everyone knows that it is not well with a thief, a liar, a swearer, a sabbath-breaker, or with any wicked person old and young, but

as there are many other injurious things which are frequently overlooked, I will refer more particularly to them.

It is not well with a boy or girl who has *bad habits*. Habits are little things at first. In their commencement they have no more power over us than if we were bound with a cobweb; but if allowed to grow they will eventually hold us as with manacles of iron. It is said of fire and water that they are good servants, but bad masters; but wrong habits are bad even as servants, and when they become masters they are intolerable.

What a useful lesson may be learned from the fable of the camel that, one stormy night, went to a cobbler's stall and said, "I wish you would let me put my nose inside, out of the cold;" which he was kindly allowed to do; but this was immediately followed with requests to have a little more of his body admitted, till eventually he got in altogether. When the storm had abated the cobbler requested his guest to go out, which the camel refused to do, telling his host that he should not have allowed him to come in at the first. In this way do habits by degrees creep upon us, till we find ourselves powerless to get rid of them.

A minister is reported on one occasion

to have preached a sermon with thirty-six heads. In speaking of habits we certainly might surpass this number, for their name is legion ; so it will be best to single out a few of the most prominent.

Laziness is a very bad habit. Solomon says, in his Proverbs, "A slothful man is brother to him who is a great waster."

There was once a man in a workhouse who had, in eighteen months, extravagantly spent £12,000. This man, it is true, wasted his money ; but a slothful person wastes his time, which is far more precious.

The wise man also says, "The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns." In the east they make thorn hedges, and they are so sharp that it is impossible to get through them ; and just as difficult is it for anyone once entangled to escape from the way of slothfulness.

How frequently does laziness develop itself in the young ! We may even see it in the way children learn their lessons. One little girl said to her mother, after sitting a long time carelessly over her book, "Oh, I can't learn this ; it is so hard !" But her mother said, "My dear, if you will learn it in ten minutes, I will take you presently to see a panorama." It need scarcely be said that the

lesson was quickly mastered, which plainly showed that it was the child's laziness, and not the difficult nature of the lesson, which prevented her learning it at first.

On one occasion a boy was told to chop some wood for his mother. Instead of setting about his task, he was lazily lamenting that he was not a Wellington, or Napoleon, or some great hero. His cousin, who heard him, said, "The way to become a great man is to always perform your present duty to the best of your ability." The boy at once seized the chopper, and determined to be a hero by fighting his own laziness.

There is an interesting anecdote related of a boy who applied for an engagement on board a vessel. The captain said, "What can you do?" He replied, "I will try to do anything that I am set to do." "What have you done?" "I have chopped all mother's wood for the last two years." "Well, then, what haven't you done?" But the boy was equal even to this poser, and replied, "I haven't whispered in school for twelve months." "Then," said the captain, "I will engage you; for the boy who can master a wood-pile and bridle his tongue must have some good stuff in him."

Another bad habit is to *tell tales*. In some

cases, where anything wrong has been done, it is proper to tell our parents or our masters what has occurred, but it would not be right to tell all the neighbourhood. It was right of Joseph to tell his father of the wrong doings of his brethren ; but it would certainly have been wrong had he told others of their folly. "The words of a talebearer," says Solomon, "are as wounds." It would be thought wrong to wound any one with a knife. Yet how frequently and how cruelly is a wound given with the tongue, and an injury done that can never be repaired !

It is related that a woman, on one occasion, when confessing to her priest, told him that she had been guilty of spreading scandal respecting her neighbours. As a penance for this she was told to procure two chickens and pluck the feathers, scattering them to the wind as she walked along the road. She quickly accomplished her task, and returned to tell the priest. "Now," said he, "go and pick up all the feathers you have scattered." "It is impossible," she replied. "Then learn from this," said he, "that it is easy to scatter injurious reports respecting your neighbours, but it is impossible afterwards to recover them, or remove their effects." Much as priests are

to be shunned for their erroneous teaching, yet in the foregoing advice there is wisdom worthy of being observed by all.

It was good counsel, too, that a mother once gave her little daughter, who was about to tell her the misdeeds she had heard reported respecting a girl that she knew. "My dear," said her mother, "before you tell me, put your words through three sieves. Is the report true? Is it kind to repeat it? Is it necessary that I should know?" If all talebearers sifted their words in this manner before speaking, surely their race would quickly become extinct.

There are many other bad habits, such as *untidiness, selfishness, carelessness, forgetfulness, &c.*, but I must pass on to notice the very dangerous habits of *smoking* and *drinking*. If I meet a boy with a pipe in his mouth, I feel he has taken a big step downwards, but if I see one drinking a glass of wine I feel he has taken ten steps downward. Smoking is a dirty, expensive, and unnecessary habit, and drinking is its first cousin. Of fifty young men who formed a smoking and drinking club, only six grew up to be respectable men; the others either died an early death, or for a few years dragged on a miserable existence, respected and esteemed by none.

The drink list for one year exhibits the following consequences:—Three hundred murders, one hundred thousand sent to prison, and two hundred thousand children rendered orphans—a result that speaks volumes as to the evil of this fearful habit. Many individual instances might be given of those who have been ruined by drink, but one alone must suffice.

An educated young Scotchman on one occasion came to a celebrated temperance advocate, and told him the sad story of his career. He had in his early life received every advantage in the way of training and education, so that he could exhibit diplomas from the University of Edinburgh; yet the whole of his prospects had been blasted through the influence of drink. The gentleman spoke to him kindly and seriously, but without any effect. The young man held out his hand and said, "Shake hands with me once more," and then left the room exclaiming, "I am a lost laddie! I am a lost laddie!" Poor fellow! he was like a boat that has been drawn into the rapids of Niagara—powerless to escape from that which was hurrying him on to destruction.

Oh, who can tell the strength of bad habits when persisted in? The story is told of a sailor who, when walking along the beach,

accidentally slipped his foot into the link of a heavy chain, one end of which was fastened to a large stone on the shore, and the other to an anchor in the water. The man endeavoured to extricate his foot, but after repeated efforts he became alarmed and called for assistance, but his friends were powerless to help him. The services of a blacksmith, who lived at some distance from the spot, were then sought, but when he arrived he found that his implements were not strong enough to sever the chain. In the meantime the tide was rapidly rising, and when the blacksmith returned a second time, the waters were too high to allow him to perform his work. The poor sailor in his agony cried out for a doctor to cut off his leg, but he only arrived just in time to see the poor fellow sink beneath the waves.

How forcibly does this anecdote illustrate the iron grip with which Giant Habit lays hold of his victims, so that neither their own power nor that of their friends or relatives are able to deliver them from his thraldom.

It is not well with the child *that has evil companions*. These may be of two kinds, either wicked associates or bad books which they may read; either or both of which may do incalculable harm. Although Solomon wrote,

44 "IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?"

"Enter not into the paths of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men," yet his own son, Rehoboam, foolishly followed the advice of the young men, while he ignored that of the old men who had been his father's counsellors; and through doing this he lost the greater portion of his kingdom.

How many baits has Satan to ensnare the unwary, which he gilds over to make them appear beautiful and attractive in the eyes of his victims! There is a certain fable which tells of a lion, who, when he became too old to hunt for his prey, told the jackal to tell the beasts of the forest that he was sick and hoped they would come and see him; to which invitation some responded, and fell easy victims to his imperial majesty; presently a fox came, but stood at a respectful distance from the den. "Come in," said the lion; but Reynard respectfully declined the honour. The lion then pressed him for the reason why he should refuse to come in to an old friend's house when he was sick. "Because I perceive," said the shrewd fox, "that about here all the footsteps lead into your den, but I do not see that any of them lead out of it."

So will it be with everyone that is enticed by Satan in the downward road, whether by

open sin, by the power of bad habits, or by the influence of evil companions; they will find that while there are many paths which lead into his den, yet those who once enter its gloomy portals will never find one road that leads out of it again.

The second part of our subject is to show *the child with whom it is well.*

It is well with those that make a *good choice*. Choosing to be honest, truthful, industrious, and obedient, is certainly a worthy choice for all to make; but it is far better with those who make the same choice that one did of whom Jesus said, "But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." The young King Solomon made the same happy choice when he was asked of God in a dream what He should give him; he did not choose pleasure, wealth, or fame, but he asked for wisdom, which God granted him. Moses, brought up in Pharaoh's palace, could not be happy there; he loved the poor brickmakers and slaves more than Pharaoh and all his household, for he felt they were the favourites of Heaven; therefore he too made a happy choice, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, esteeming

45 "IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?"

the reproofs of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Ruth, too, made a good choice when she left her home and her idols in the land of Moab and clave unto Naomi, who was sorrowfully going back to her old home. Ruth's reply to her mother-in-law when urged to return home is worthy of being written in letters of gold. "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

It is cheering to find, from accounts which are recorded from time to time, that there are many even in the present day who are led by the Spirit of God to make the same choice as those did which are recorded in the Scriptures of Truth. Take, for instance, the following interesting account of a youth who was brought up to regularly attend the Sabbath-school. Whilst there, he was fortunate in having for his teacher a godly man, who was kind and affectionate, and very desirous of being the in-

strument of God in leading him in "the way of peace." But every effort the good man put forth George treated with indifference and disregard. In the class he was exceedingly troublesome, and delighted in pinching and tantalizing the other boys. All this, though trying, did not discourage the teacher, but evoked his sympathy and zeal. On one occasion George was so incorrigible that the teacher had to remove him lower down the class, away from the rest of the scholars. This so enraged him, that he sprang to his feet, and defiantly shook his fist at the teacher.

Time rolled on, and George was removed, with his parents, to one of the principal manufacturing towns in England; but previous to his departure his teacher presented him with a Bible, in which was written these words, "*Use it, and not abuse it.*" For a short time he did read it, but good impressions soon vanished, like the early dew, so that he frequently spent his Sabbaths in visiting public parks, &c. However, it so happened that, after a little more than a year, he with his parents returned to their native place. The first to welcome him was his old devoted teacher, who spoke kindly to him, and hoped he would resume his place in the class on the following

Sunday. Being struck with such undeserved kindness, he acceded to his teacher's unfortunate request; and now things went on rather smoother than before, and at last the teacher persuaded him to attend the week-night prayer-meeting. The first hymn sung was—

" When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come
To fetch Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand ?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at Thy right hand ? "

The Holy Spirit used these words as an arrow of conviction to George's soul. He fell, guilty and helpless, before the Lord. The storm-clouds of divine vengeance seemed to threaten him with sudden destruction. He continued in this terrible state of mind for eighteen long, dreary months, during which time it would be impossible to relate what he suffered in his mind. At length the Lord answered his many earnest prayers, and set his soul at liberty by the application of these words, "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption" (Psa. cxxx. 7). He was now enabled to rely upon the merits and death of Jesus Christ for salvation, and was "filled with joy

and peace in believing." The teacher, who had observed the change, and had often spoken words of consolation, now solicited some account of the Lord's dealing with him, which rejoiced his soul greatly; for he found his former pupil was now like one of old, sitting clothed, and in his right mind, at the feet of Christ.

Some years ago, a minister used to carry about with him a little book containing three leaves. The first was a black one, which set forth the appearance of a sinner in the sight of God. The next leaf was a red one, which signified that nothing but the blood of Christ could hide a black sinner. The third leaf was a white one, which clearly set forth how a sinner, through the covering of Christ's righteousness, appears before God, purer than the driven snow.

George now knew, by sweet experience, what was signified by these three leaves; and he desired to show the effects of it in his life. He therefore became a zealous teacher in the Sunday-school, then the secretary, and eventually the superintendent, and was greatly beloved by teachers and scholars. He could never render God sufficient praise that he should have been thus brought from darkness

50 “IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?”

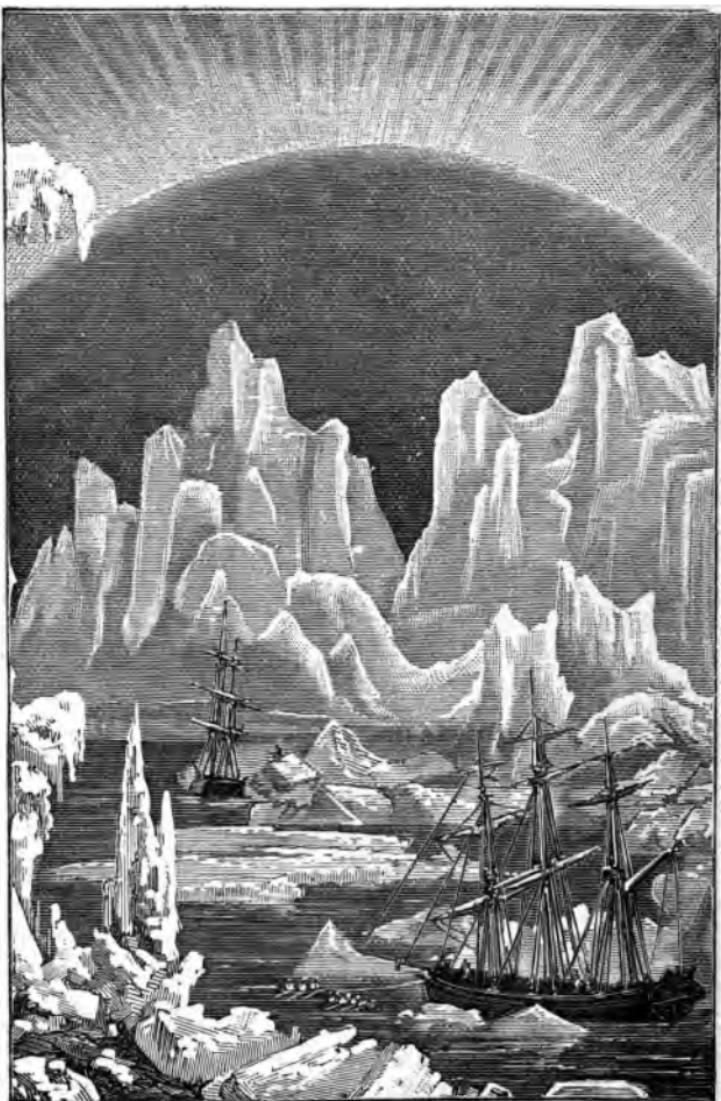
to light and from the kingdom of Satan to that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus it is evident that it is not well with any person young or old, either in this world or the next, who chooses to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, knowing that for all these things God will bring them into judgment. But with those who make the Lord their Guide it is well, for they have not only the promise of the life that now is, but also of that which is to come.

“ In every state secure,
Kept as Jehovah’s eye,
Tis well with them while life endures
And well when called to die.”



D 2



A GREAT SIGHT IN NATURE:
The Aurora Borealis in the Arctic Regions.



GREAT SIGHTS.

THREE are a great variety of pleasures which enchant and interest the inhabitants of the world, but amongst them all probably none have greater charms for young and old than the pleasures of sight-seeing. No trouble is thought too great, and no time too long, which is spent in gratifying this desire. Look, for instance, at the crowds which flock to the races, to the theatres, and to other places of amusement—yea, even to a funeral or an execution—their one desire being to gratify their morbid craving after sight-seeing. What crowds, some few years back, thronged the streets of London on the occasion of the illumi-

nations in commemoration of the recovery of the Prince of Wales! The rushing and the crushing was fearful, and it is not surprising that some were trampled to death by the crowd ; yet this risk of injury to life and limb was eagerly run by those anxious to behold this memorable sight.

In thinking of the many vain and useless, let alone wicked, sights which so many eagerly behold, we are reminded of Solomon's wise conclusion. He sipped of all earthly pleasure, just as a chemist might test poison, in order to discover any good in them likely to benefit himself or others ; and, after giving us an eloquent description of all he attained unto, such as mirth, folly, wine, houses, vineyards, gardens, servants, cattle, silver, gold, men singers, women singers, and musical instruments of all sorts, he concludes by saying, "Yea, whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them." But what was his final decision respecting these things ? Listen, all ye young people, and consider : "*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought ; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit.*"

But we must pass on from these sights described by Solomon as vanity, in order to consider a few sights which are really worth

beholding. We will first refer to the many *grand sights* which may be seen in *God's works of creation*.

Staying on one occasion in the Isle of Wight, we were directed to a lofty hill, from whence an extensive view of the lovely island could be obtained. After a toilsome journey we reached the summit, and for some time feasted our eyes upon the expansive and glorious prospect of God's great works which lay unfolded to our view.

People from all quarters of the globe travel to America, that they may behold the magnificent scenery of Niagara Falls ; and, as some of them gaze upon these grand but fearful cataracts, their hearts are solemnized as they are led to think of their mighty Maker, whose noble works they are beholding.

But, probably, nowhere can so many beauties be beheld as in the regions of the North Pole ; especially when the glorious Aurora Borealis is seen illuminating the heavens, frequently in the form of a luminous arch, which remains visible many hours, and is in a constant state of motion. It rises and falls, extending eastward and westward, the beautiful rays fluttering like a ribbon agitated by the wind. The colours are so varied that they give to the scene a

most brilliant and variegated effect. But these beauties very few are able to behold, except in pictures, owing to the dangers and inaccessibility of the Polar regions.

But no such journey as those we have mentioned need be taken in order that we may behold the works of God, for are we not surrounded by them on every hand? They can be seen from the giant Alps to a grain of sand, from the unwieldy elephant to a tiny insect, from the lofty cedar to a blade of grass, from the glorious sun to the little cloud "like a man's hand."

The story has been often told, and cannot be repeated too often in this day of unbelief, how that great traveller, Mungo Park, was attacked in the desert by robbers, and stripped of almost everything he possessed in the way of goods, food, and clothes, and then deserted. In this destitute and forlorn condition he was ready to lay down and die in despair; but just then his eye fell upon a little piece of moss growing alone in the wild waste. The thought struck him that the same God who was in the desert caring for that fresh green moss could also care for and deliver him. This thought so encouraged him that he again pressed forward, and eventually succeeded in reaching a place of safety.

Thus can we also behold the wondrous works of creation scattered around us, “immensely great, immensely small;” and the sight of them should lead us to a profitable consideration of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the great God who made them all.

We will speak next of a *noble sight*; and what can be a more noble sight than beholding any one *who dares to do right, and who fears to do wrong?*

It was a noble sight when the three Hebrew children refused to bow down to the golden image which the king commanded them to worship, and chose rather to suffer the pains of a fiery furnace than the pangs of a guilty conscience.

It was a noble sight when Daniel knelt down with his window open towards Jerusalem, even though the decree was signed that all found so doing should be cast into a lions’ den.

It was a noble sight when Joseph turned from evil, with those memorable words, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

And are there none in the present day moved with the same spirit as these ancient worthies, to whom the approval of their conscience, their Bible, and their God is more precious than the

smiles or frowns of their fellow-mortals? We believe there are some, and they are more worthy the name of heroes than the greatest warriors who are so called.

That was a noble sight when a young sailor knelt down to pray before his ungodly ship-mates, and also when a youth at school did the same before his careless companions, and these brave youths not only did so once, but continued to persevere in it, amidst all the taunts, jeers, and persecutions which fell upon them thick and fast; but at length they ceased, and, in addition to the comfort of having maintained a good conscience, they also had the pleasure of seeing some of their young persecutors fall on their knees and follow their example.

We now have to mention a *profitable sight*, and few things are more so than a *sight of ourselves*. We do not mean by this, looking at our faces in a mirror, but rather seeing ourselves as God sees us. To do this, we shall need to look into a glass which God has provided for that purpose, even His Word. But, just as we cannot see ourselves perfectly in a natural mirror without the light of the sun, neither can we see ourselves profitably in the glass of God's Word without the light of His Holy Spirit. How many in the world think themselves very

good, and, like the self-righteous Pharisee, thank God they are so much better than other people ! Why is this ? Because they are in darkness, and know nothing as they ought to know ; but when God, by His Holy Spirit, shines into their hearts, they begin to feel like the publican, who, we are told, "dared not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, crying, God be merciful to me a sinner !" The sight of ourselves is a truly humbling sight, but oh, how needful ! otherwise we should never prize that blessed sight we have to speak of next.

A precious sight is a sight of Jesus. There are multitudes in the world who see no comeliness in Jesus that they should desire Him. To them He is only like a root out of a dry ground, and most of us know how worthless and unsightly such a thing looks ; but there are others, though we fear but few in number, who see so much beauty in Jesus that they cannot find language sufficiently forcible to set forth His glory. Hence He is compared to the most beautiful things this world possesses, such as ivory, marble, gold, flowers, spices, &c. "Yea," says the Church, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely" (Solomon's Song v. 9, 16). It is only

those who have had a sight of themselves as lost sinners, in danger of everlasting punishment, that are privileged to behold the preciousness of Christ.

This may be seen by the following anecdote:— A Scotch minister once spoke to a little scullery-maid, at a country inn where he was staying. He found her so very ignorant that his heart was touched with sympathy, and he yearned for her soul's welfare. Before leaving the house, he taught her this simple prayer, “Lord, show me myself.” Some time after, the minister had occasion to visit the place again, and found the poor girl in great trouble, for the Lord had shown her what a great sinner she was in His sight. The minister then advised her to pray these words—“Lord, show me Thyself.” The second petition was also answered, and some time after, the scullery-maid called upon the minister and told him what great things God had done for her soul.

There are some sights in the world that appear very beautiful till we have seen something greater and better; then that which we thought so beautiful at first sinks into the shade and is almost forgotten. So will it be in the case of all those who are favoured with a sight

of Jesus as their Saviour. All earthly sights, however grand, will be as nothing when compared to Him. "We would see Jesus," said some of old; and is not this still the desire of some upon earth? Reader, is it yours?

The next point is a solemn one. It will be truly an *awful sight* which will be seen on the *judgment day*. The sights we have previously mentioned are seen by some and not by others, but this awful sight will be seen by every soul that has lived upon this globe.

When God came down upon Mount Sinai, we are told there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly; and so fearful was the sight that the people trembled, and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." This scene that occurred upon Mount Sinai, is a faint type of the day of judgment.

In the "Pilgrim's Progress," it is related how Christian went into the house of the Interpreter, and saw one rising from his bed trembling greatly. When Christian asked the

reason, the man replied, "This night, as I was in my sleep, I dreamed, and lo ! the heavens grew exceeding black, also it thundered and lightened in most fearful wise, that it put me into an agony ; so I looked up in my dream, and saw the clouds racked at an unusual rate, upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw also a Man sit upon a cloud attended by the thousands of heaven. I heard then a voice saying, 'Arise ye dead, and come to judgment !' and with that the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad, and some sought to hide themselves under the mountains. Then I saw the Man that sat upon the cloud open the book, and bid the world draw near ; and I heard it proclaimed, 'Gather together the tares, the chaff, and the stubble, and cast them into the burning lake ; ' and I also heard it said, 'Gather My wheat into My garner.' I thought the day of judgment was come, and I was not ready for it. My conscience did accuse me on every side, and I thought the Judge always had His eye upon me, showing indignation in His countenance ; and so I awaked."

This scene, depicted so graphically as a dream, will surely one day be seen by each of us in reality—

“ Day of judgment ! day of wonders !
Hark, the trumpet’s awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round !
How the summons
Will the sinner’s heart confound ! ”

What a *glorious sight* will be a *sight of Heaven* to the happy company who are privileged to behold it ! It is called a “better country,” “Paradise,” “mansions in the heavens,” a place of peace, rest, and glory. But no eye has ever seen, no ear ever heard, and no heart ever fully conceived, a tithe of the glories of that upper world.

A child, years ago, who had been brought up in a mine, was at length taken to behold those beauties of nature to which we referred at the commencement of this paper. He saw the sun, listened to the birds, admired the flowers, watched the rivers, strolled over the greensward, and it really seemed to him, seeing it as he did for the first time, like an earthly Paradise. When the boy returned to the mine, he endeavoured to describe to his companions what he had seen and heard, but, after making the attempt, he gave it up, saying, “ You must see it yourselves to understand what it is.” So it is with the glories of Heaven. It is a true

report we have heard in this lower world concerning them, but, if ever permitted to behold the reality, we shall have to confess, as the Queen of Sheba did, after beholding the glory of Solomon, that the half has not been told us.

But we now close our sketch with the words of Him “who spake as never man yet spake :”
“ *Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* ”





ON THE WATCH.

VISITORS to that favourite seaside resort, Eastbourne, are invariably attracted to visit the bold scenery of Beachy Head, and however toilsome they find the ascent, they feel amply repaid on reaching the summit by the grand view seaward, the picturesque landscape on shore, and by obtaining here and there a peep over terrible precipices.

Few, perhaps, visit this spot without speaking a word with the weather-beaten coastguards who are stationed there, and gladly take a look at some passing vessel through their powerful telescope.

It is very interesting to watch the various flags being hoisted and lowered, by which means communications are carried on between the crew on board the ship and the coastguards ashore. No vessel can escape the searching gaze of these men, who are found stationed at intervals all round the coast of our island home, by which means it is rendered quite impossible for an enemy to approach our shores without their movements being known; and should any suspicious circumstance occur, it has to be at once reported to the proper authorities.

By some late Government returns it appears that the number of men employed in this service on shore was 4,300, at a cost of nearly £500,000. They were originally placed along our coast to prevent smuggling, which was at one time very prevalent; and at Hastings and other places where smuggling was largely practised, there are people now living who can relate many desperate encounters between smugglers and the preventives. But happily these sad occurrences have ceased, the system of free trade having rendered the dishonest and dangerous calling of the smuggler too unremunerative to be as tempting as it was formerly, and the coastguards can now serve

as required in the navy, or look after the shipping interest, as they pass along the coast, and render help in cases of shipwreck, &c., from the shore. But theirs is not always pleasant work, for whether it be summer or winter, rain or snow, day or night, their vigil has still to be maintained, which consideration should call forth our sympathy, as well as our gratitude.

Not only is it necessary to keep watch on our coasts against a foreign foe, but we need watchmen to protect our homes. Some years ago watchmen, or "Old Charleys," as they were called, use to perambulate our streets, and make night hideous by their cries as they droned out, "One o'clock, and a cold and frosty morning," and other similar sentences, which they repeated at intervals throughout the night. They were allowed little watch-boxes for shelter, but sometimes they so far forgot their duties as to go to sleep, which occasionally resulted in their being nailed up in their boxes by some wrongly-disposed person either out of malice or fun. These old men were at last supplanted by our present police force, whose protection is far more efficient.

Let us now leave our coasts and streets to the care of their proper guardians, and

refer to a few things which it is necessary *for us* to keep watch over, lest we should be robbed and spoiled by some of our many foes.

Watch your character.—A minister once truly observed that a man's character is like a pane of glass, which is good for something when whole, but once let it be smashed and it is done for, and not all the ingenuity of man could put it together again as it was before. “I would give £10,000 for a character,” said a man with a ruined reputation, “because I could make £20,000 by it, if I only possessed one.” How often do we find that a character which has been maintained for years may, by one wrong action, be so destroyed that the person who owns it finds himself disgraced and avoided by his fellow-man almost as much as those smitten with the leprosy were shunned by the Jews in days of old. Such instances should act as beacons to warn us away from the shoals, lest our barque should strike on those rocks which have proved so fatal to others. Especially should we keep watch upon that point where we think ourselves safest, and the least liable to fall, for through that avenue our foe is most likely to attack and probably overcome us. How appropriate are those words,

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed
lest he fall."

" Beset with snares on every hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand ;
Saviour divine, diffuse Thy light
To guide my doubtful footsteps right."

Watch your time.—“O time ! time ! a world of wealth for a moment of time ! ” said Queen Elizabeth, when about to launch into eternity. Doubtless many months, if not years, of her long life had been wasted in frivolous amusements ; but when, on a dying bed, she saw time in the strong light of eternity, then it appeared far more valuable than rubies. A traveller once saw the following sentence hung up in a public room in Savoy, which deserves to be printed in letters of gold : “ *A God, a moment, an eternity. A God who sees thee, a moment that flies by thee, an eternity that awaits thee. A God ye serve so ill, a moment by which ye profit so little, an eternity ye hazard so rashly.* ” Solomon went by the field of a great time-waster, “ and lo, it was grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then,” said the wise man, “ I saw, and considered it well : I looked upon it, and received instruction.” If every one profited thus by the wasted lives of the

slothful, golden moments would no longer be frittered away, but, like the busy ant, we should be found laying up in youth that knowledge which will be so useful to us in after life—yea, more, we should be seeking while in health for that religion which alone can comfort us in death ; for, says Bunyan, “ He that would live well, let him bring his last days, and let them be his company-keeper.”

“ Our life is ever on the wing,
And death is ever nigh ;
The moment when our lives begin
We all begin to die.”

Watch your companions.—“ One sinner destroyeth much good.” Leave a bad apple in the midst of a dish of good ones : the good will not restore the bad, but the bad will quickly destroy the good with which it is surrounded. In the old days, when wrecking was in vogue, many a good vessel was drawn away from a path of safety by the false lights of the Cornish wreckers, only to find, too late, that they had been lured by professed friends to certain destruction.

Behold that youth in yonder Sabbath-school. No scholar pays more attention, no lessons are better learnt, no boy gives greater promise of a

bright future ; but one day he is met by an evil youth who mocks and sneers at his school-going, and persuades him to spend the next Sabbath in the fields. To avoid being laughed at he foolishly consents, and soon the Sabbath-school is a thing of the past. The house of God is forsaken, and step by step he is drawn on in the downward course, till at last he stands a criminal at the bar of his country.

Leaving this misguided youth to his sad fate, let us look on another and more pleasing picture. A youth is surrounded by some companions, who endeavour to persuade him to go with them into a low tavern, where wicked men resort, but he boldly replies, "No ; it is against orders." "What orders ?" say they ; to which he calmly replied, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

" Oh, for a holy fear
Of every evil way,
That we may never venture near
The paths that lead astray."

Watch your souls.—That man would be thought foolish, if not mad, who takes every precaution that his garden should not be robbed, while he leaves his jewels and other valuables

entirely unprotected. Still more insane is he who cares only for the good of his body, and cares nought for the soul : “ For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ” Satan is a great soul-hunter ; the world is a fearful soul-destroyer ; and our evil hearts aid and abet them both. Who, then, can take care of his own soul when beset with such mighty foes ?

The Queen’s crown, with its precious jewels, is of such immense value that it cannot be trusted in her own charge, and is placed for safety under a strong guard in the Tower of London. So may it be said of our souls—they are far too valuable for us to take charge of ourselves, and it is only those persons who have, by God’s grace, committed their souls to the care of the only Saviour, King Jesus, who will be safe when that mighty angel shall stand forth with one foot upon the sea and one upon the land, and proclaim, “ There shall be *time* no longer ” (Rev. x. 6). “ Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

“ How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day.
When earth and heaven before His face,
Astonished, shrink away ? ”





THE JEWELS OF EARTH AND HEAVEN.



J E W E L S.

SOME TIME ago, while waiting at a railway station for a train, our eye was attracted by an advertisement announcing the sale of a "magnificent lot of jewels," comprising emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, &c., all gems of the first water. This announcement might probably have proved attractive to us had we been a buyer of such ornaments, but this not being the case we preferred rather to turn the subject over in our mind, and endeavour to gain some profitable lessons from the consideration.

All must admit that jewels are very beautiful, sparkling as they do so brilliantly in the

light, and reflecting all the colours of the rainbow. This is especially the case when a great many are seen together, at a royal wedding or at the Queen's drawing-room.

That jewels, too, are very precious does not admit of a doubt; for we all know that when thieves attack a house, their first object is to obtain possession of the jewel casket.

But there are jewels more truly beautiful, and far more precious than any of these so-called gems of the first water. These are owned by God Himself, who calls them "His jewels." (Malachi iii. 17.) It is true that all precious stones belong to the Lord, for He made them; but to Him earthly jewels are of no more account than common pebbles in the road. Then how precious must His people be, to be called His jewels.

The brave missionary who has been brought to know the value of salvation for himself, and who, out of love to God and his fellow-men, goes forth with his life in his hand, that he may preach amongst the heathens the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, is one of God's noble jewels. Such men are far more worthy of our admiration and gratitude than are many of those military heroes, such as a Napoleon or a Cæsar, whose deeds of bloodshed are so much

admired by men generally. Oh, that a goodly army of missionaries may go forth in the power of the Spirit, “ till the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea ! ” Then will be brought in that glorious time, when swords will be broken into ploughshares, spears into pruning-hooks, and nations shall learn war no longer.

Let us now describe another of God’s jewels that we have often been favoured to visit, and that not without profit.

In one room, plainly furnished, lives a poor but godly woman. True, she is dependent for her support upon the bounty of her friends ; true, she has been bedridden for years with a sad spinal complaint ; true, she often suffers both by night and day many hours of agonizing pain, yet no sooner are we seated by her side, and look into her pain-worn face, than we find it radiant with smiles, and at once she begins to relate some interposition of God’s providence on her behalf, or tells of some sweet promise from the Word of God, which has come and cheered her heart in the midst of all her sufferings. One desire, too, this good woman has above all others. “ What is that for ? ” may be asked. “ Is it that she may get well again ? ” Oh, no ; but rather that she

may depart from this world, "and be with Christ, which is far better." We are not in her company many minutes before feeling fully persuaded that we are in the presence of one of God's precious jewels. And how many such there are scattered up and down the earth, although they are but few in number when compared with the wicked, who are well described as dross, and compared to other things which are of no value but to be burnt!

Let us now proceed to show the way in which God's people become His jewels.

Jewels are chosen. When a lady wishes to purchase a jewel she generally looks at several, and then chooses the most beautiful and valuable that she can afford. Seldom or never does anyone choose a jewel, or anything else, unless they can see in it something to love or to admire.

Upon one occasion when there was an eruption of Mount Etna, two young men each determined to take away with them the most valuable treasure they could find, and it is said that one took up his aged father, and the other his aged mother, and carried them to a place of safety. They certainly made choice of two valuable jewels.

Now although many can see something

worth choosing in precious stones, and in other earthly treasures, yet how few seem to understand the value of the jewel which they carry in their bosom! If they did so, surely they would make choice of those things which would prove for the welfare of their immortal souls. It has well been said, that “we have two eyes, two ears, two hands, and two feet; if one of these should fail we could use the other; but we have only one soul; if that is lost we have lost all.” Well may that important question be asked, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world,” with its pleasures, its glory, and its riches, and yet lose his soul at last? for “What can a man give in exchange for his soul?” When Mary delighted to sit at the feet of Christ, it showed that she valued her soul, and Jesus said of her, “One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.” Any who, like her, are led to make this noble choice, do so because God has first made choice of them to be His jewels. They were not chosen because God could see anything in them to admire, for they are all black sinners. Indeed, the Scriptures declare that He has chosen “the foolish things, the weak things, the base things, the despised things, and the

things which are not, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

When the prophet Samuel went to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king over Israel, he made a grand mistake, for when he looked upon Eliab the firstborn, and saw his fine stature and handsome countenance, he at once concluded that the Lord's anointed was before him; but God reproved Samuel for judging by the outward appearance, and the result proved that all Jesse's most likely sons were passed by, while the shepherd boy, who was minding the sheep, that no one seemed to think much about, had to be fetched, and proved to be the Lord's chosen one. Truly it may be said, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Jewels have to be purchased by those who possess them. Some have been known to fetch fabulous sums, varying from a quarter of a million to a million and a half; but God's jewels cost a far greater sum than the most valued earthly gem. They were not bought with such corruptible things as silver and gold. The life even of an angel, had it been given, would not have redeemed them. Therefore the precious blood of Christ, the life of God's dear Son, was the vast sum paid for these pre-

cious jewels, that they might obtain a crown that will never fade away.

“ O what inestimable worth
Must in those crowns appear,
For which the Lord came down to earth,
And bought for them so dear.”

A visitor to a cemetery in America, noticed a man paying very great attention to one of the graves. He asked him if it was the grave of his wife, or his parent, or of some dear relative. To each of these enquiries the stranger answered with a negative. “ Then why,” asked his interrogator, now becoming very curious, “ do you pay such loving attention to this particular grave? ” “ He died for me,” was the brief reply. “ How did that occur? ” said the visitor, being anxious to sift the matter to the bottom. “ I was chosen to go to the war, but having a wife and family dependent upon me for support, my friend, who was unmarried, volunteered to fill my post, and he died for me.” A piece of wood was afterwards placed at the head of the grave with the simple sentence, “ He died for me.” If such devotion can be shown to the memory of one who gave his life for his friend, far greater affection should be shown to the memory of Jesus, who

died, not for His friends, but for those who were once His rebels and His foes.

Jewels are rendered beautiful in two ways. The first is by *being polished*. In their natural state they have little more beauty than an ordinary stone, but when the polishing has taken place their beauty begins to appear. Some diamonds have taken two years to polish, and have cost as much as £3,000. So God has to polish His jewels. Till He begins to do this they appear no different to other people, but when His Word, like a sword, pierces their heart, there is a change in them, and, with one of old, they begin to cry, “What must I do to be saved?” The polishing of God’s jewels is often a long and a painful process, but in due time the work is accomplished, and the gem is fitted for the Redeemer’s crown.

If jewels were always kept in the dark very little beauty would be seen in them; but only bring them out, and let the light of the sun be reflected upon them, then how brilliantly do they sparkle! God’s jewels have no beauty of their own, but when the sun of righteousness reflects His glorious hues upon them, then their beauty is as clearly seen as when the natural sun, shining upon a dark cloud, reveals in it the gorgeous colours of the rainbow.

God's jewels by the world are often counted the filth and off-scouring of all things, but now and again the spirit of Christ can be seen in them, even by those who persecute them and hate their religion. The persecutors of Stephen saw his face shine as though it had been the face of an angel, yet they stoned him to death. It is said also that men took knowledge of Christ's disciples that they had been with Jesus; without doubt some of His glory was manifested in them. Moses brought so much of the Lord's glory down with him from the mount that the Israelites could not look upon him till he had covered his face with a veil; and is not Christ's glory still reflected in His people upon earth? Verily, it is.

We heard a friend tell only the other day of an old lady who for years he had seen attending the house of God, and as she came quietly in and out, he frequently saw her ornaments shine; not, said he, such ornaments as bracelets, chains, earrings, &c., but the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." In fact, he saw the spirit of Christ which was in her shining out in her life. This dear old lady had been called by grace when only a child four years of age, and when a girl, working for her living, she would often

spend part of her dinner-hour alone in prayer ; and after being a witness for Christ for many years upon earth, she departed joyfully to be with Him for ever whom she had loved so dearly on earth.

Jewels need to be protected. Those who possess these valuables have considerable anxiety where they can place them for safety, but notwithstanding the greatest care, and oftentimes the protection of iron safes, yet thieves get hold of them and carry them off, much to the sorrow of their rightful owners. So God's jewels are subjected to many dangers, and are beset by numerous foes. Satan, like a roaring lion, seeks to devour them ; the enchanting world, like Vanity Fair, seeks to allure or affright them, and their own hearts seek to deceive them. But, happily, they have an almighty Protector, who watches over them continually, and will assuredly preserve them safe to His heavenly kingdom.

It is true that many of these jewels have fallen a prey to the malice of their persecutors, and, like their Lord, they passed from earth to Heaven through a perfect sea of suffering ; yet the noble army of martyrs, a brilliant galaxy of jewels, have served God better by their death than they

could have done by their life ; and though the sufferings of the stake and the rack may have been sharp, yet it was sooner over than is often-times the suffering of those who die a lingering death from natural causes.

“See the suffering Church of Christ,
Gathered from all quarters :
All contained in that red list
Were not murdered martyrs.”

Yet, when the Lord sees fit, He can protect His jewels when in the midst of the greatest danger.

Many are the instances which might be related to show how wonderfully they are preserved, but perhaps none are more striking than the deliverances granted to that good old covenanter John Paterson. He was driven from his home, from his wife and from his children, and was hunted like a wild beast by the king’s troopers. Upon one occasion, when almost in the hands of his enemies, he fell down through a crevice in the rocks into a large cavern, where he found a safe and comfortable place of refuge, the entrance being so completely hidden that none of the inhabitants of the district knew of its existence. Many a

happy meeting of God's saints took place here; many hours were spent in sweet communion with God, and in joyful converse together, telling of God's wonderful dealings with them in providence and in grace.

On one occasion, John Paterson had gone to a preaching in a glen, and just as they were fully enjoying the meeting, the alarm was given that the troopers were coming. The meeting at once broke up, and each made for a place of safety. John Paterson at once started for his cave, but happening to look back he saw his enemies in full career after him. In his perplexity he called on the Lord to hide him under the shadow of His wings, and seeing a deep mossy furrow running across a bog he at once hid himself in it, hoping they would pass without observing him. But just then the baying of dogs fell upon his ear and sent a thrill of terror through his heart, for he knew at once that they were hunting him down. Deliverance now seemed impossible, but the godly man again lifted up his heart on high for help, or for strength to die, if that was most in accordance with God's will. Then raising his head a little, and looking through the bushes, he could see the dogs not many yards off, their heads down, and apparently

coming straight to their prey. Suddenly there was a whirr amongst the long grass, and close past his face, like a flash of lightning, dashed a fox, frightened from its lair by the near approach of the dogs. With a loud yelp the hounds turned from his track to rush after the fox; the soldiers, too, in their eagerness for the chase, forgot the poor coveuanter, and fox, dogs, horses, and men, all dashed over the moor together in wild excitement, leaving the good man to give praise unto God for having again spread over him the shadow of His wings and delivered him from his enemies.

But, although God takes such care of His jewels, yet it behoves them to be watchful. "Watch and pray," said the Lord to His disciples when on earth, and this injunction should be their watchword still. It is said that, when a flock of cranes are migrating from one place to another, when they rest at night they appoint sentinels to keep watch. These stand on one leg and grasp a stone in the other—a somewhat painful position to sleep in, but should they dose the noise of the stone falling would wake them up.

The philosopher Aristotle used to sleep holding a brass ball in his hand over a brass vessel; the noise of the ball falling would awake

him, and he at once arose to resume the business of his life.

Surely, even from the crane and from a heathen philosopher, Christians may learn a lesson of watchfulness, which they need to keep up against their three great foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Jewels are worn by those to whom they belong that they may grace the courts of earthly monarchs, and will not God's jewels, who have been chosen, purchased, polished, and made beautiful, some day be worn to grace the court of the King of kings. Indeed they will, for it is declared in that Word which cannot fail, "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels" (Mal. iii. 17). And, oh ! what a shout of praise will go up to Him through whose grace they reached that blest abode !

"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine,
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, for ever thine."

It is very interesting when, amongst the young, we find the Lord picking out and preparing His jewels for Heaven. There is a sweet account of a child thus wrought upon which

we have often read and thought about with pleasure, and now give it here as an illustration of our subject.

“Some years ago,” said a minister, “it was my custom to close our Sunday-school with a short address, grounded on some portion of Scripture suited to children. Many of the poor people, as well as their children, attended, and no small blessing followed these little sermons to children. The story I am about to tell you will show but one case out of many in which it pleased God to bless this simple teaching.

“We had just closed one of these interesting services, and were quitting the Church where they were held, when the mother of little Mary Stevens, one of our scholars, came running to me in the greatest distress. ‘Pray, sir,’ she exclaimed, ‘pray come as quickly as you can to my poor Mary, for I think she is dying, and nothing will do but she must see you. She has asked for you all the week, but we thought she would get better, and didn’t like to trouble you.’ Poor little Mary! I knew her well. Her delicate and feeble frame had often attracted my attention ; and whenever I passed her class, and listened to her weak voice, interrupted by a constant cough, I felt that her days on earth would be few. She was a dear

child, beloved by her teacher and all her little companions. None equalled her in the class. None repeated the hymn or gave the texts so well as little Mary.

"I immediately complied with her mother's request, and was in a few minutes at the bedside of the little sufferer. . . . She began her little history. I wish I could tell it just in her own simple words. I will do so as nearly as I can, but it is not easy to talk as a little child of six years old. She held my hand while she spoke, and, turning her little head on the pillow towards me, thus began:—'I think I shall die, but I am going to Heaven. Jesus loves me and I love Him. He has made me one of His lambs, and soon I shall be with Him. Oh, I did so want to see you, and am glad you are come at last, for I know you will pray with me, and tell me about Jesus.' 'And how, dear child,' I asked, 'do you know that Jesus loves you, and will take you to Heaven?' 'Oh, sir,' she replied, and her eyes brightened as she spoke, 'one night you preached about Christ's lambs. You said Jesus loves His lambs, and carries them in His bosom. Then you told us that little children that believe in Him are His lambs, and that He loves them now as dearly as He did the little children He

once took in His arms and blessed. And then you said, "Are there any lambs in my school?" When you asked that question, I thought, "Oh, how I should like to be one, and lie in Christ's bosom, and know He loved me!" And as soon as I got home, and was alone in my bed, I began to think much about being a lamb. But then I began to cry, for I felt how very naughty and wicked I had been, and I was afraid I could never be a lamb. And then I remembered some more words of your sermon. You said all Christ's sheep, and his lambs too, are lost till He seeks and saves them. And then I felt "Perhaps I'm a lost lamb," and so I got out of bed—for I knew mother wouldn't come up yet—and kneeled down, and prayed to Jesus to save me. I cried, and said, "I'm a lost lamb; I'm a wicked child; do save me, do forgive me!" And the next morning, when I awoke, I prayed again. And at last I began to feel happy, for I thought, Jesus has promised to hear, and He will never break His word. And soon I felt sure He had heard me, for my sins seemed all gone. Oh, I am sure now Jesus loves me, and has made me His lamb. I am not afraid to die, for he will take me to Heaven."

Such was this dear child's history of

God's mercy to her, told amid many distressing interruptions, caused by her cough. I cannot describe the pretty childlike manner in which she spoke, but the tale, and manner in which it was told, affected me deeply. If ever I had seen the grace of God, here it was in all its loveliness. At the close of her sad history, the poor child was so exhausted, that I could only say to her, 'My dear child, God has been very gracious to you. Let us praise Him for His mercy.' And I knelt down, and poured forth the feelings of my heart concerning her. I then left her for the day, rejoicing in what I had seen.

"I did not see her many times, for in one short week she was gone; but at every fresh visit, I discovered more of the beauty of grace in her. I cannot tell you all she said, for in so many years I have forgotten some things.

"But I must bring my story to a close. It was early on Sunday morning—the Sunday following that on which I first visited her—when I was called on by a kind neighbour, who knew my deep interest in the child, to go and witness her happy departure. On entering the room, I was immediately noticed by the dear child. A faint smile, and the effort, as usual, to take my hand, told me that she knew me.

I said but few words to her, only telling her that Jesus never changes His love. Nor was she able to speak, except that now and then she uttered, ‘Jesus,’ and one, ‘Jesus, take me.’ Death approached rapidly. Her hand grew cold, her breathing slower. At last her little head fell slightly on the pillow, and dear little Mary was ‘asleep in Jesus.’ I cannot say what I felt, as I let go her cold hand and turned away. I was not a father then, and had no dear child of my own, as now I have, to love and care for. But it seemed as if I had lost my own. And so indeed I had, for God had made me a spiritual father to her, and I could not but love her as my child. But when I considered that she was ‘taken away from the evil to come’—that her sickness and pain were gone—that her happy spirit was with Jesus, beholding and sharing his glory—I felt that I ought to rejoice rather than mourn.”

Thus we see how God’s jewels are to be found amongst the young, as well as amongst those of riper years. It is especially cheering to behold His grace in any, but especially so when manifest in the young. Yet how little are these jewels esteemed by the men of this world. The saints, in old times, were reckoned only as the filth and off-scouring of all things,

and those who live in the present day have no higher value put upon them by the world. Nevertheless, in the eyes of their God and Saviour, they are valued above rubies.

“ There is a family on earth
Whose Father fills a throne ;
But, though a seed of heavenly birth,
To men they’re little known.

“ But ‘tis the King who reigns above
That claims them for His own—
The favoured objects of His love,
And destined to a throne.”





THE FOX IN THE HEN ROOST.



“LITTLE FOXES.”

IN Eastern vineyards the “little foxes” do a great deal of damage, not only by eating the grapes, but also by the way they tear and destroy the vines, so that husbandmen need to keep a sharp look-out for them, and either prevent their getting in, or capture them as quickly as possible afterwards. This will show us the literal meaning of the wise king’s words in the Canticles: “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.”

No doubt many sermons have been preached from these words for the benefit of men and women, but there are lessons connected with

them which are equally important for boys and girls to know.

We might compare the vines to *our bodies*, and the grapes to *our souls*. Now, the “little foxes” know that the grapes are the choicest part of the vine, but, in obtaining the fruit, they care not how much they damage the vine. So also our souls are of far greater value than our bodies, and there are numbers of “little foxes” continually seeking to destroy them, and in doing so they commonly injure our bodies, therefore it is necessary to keep a sharp lookout for them, and seek for wisdom to nip their depredations in the bud.

The first fox we would mention is *Mr. Cunning*, but, like many bad men, he has several other names, so we might say, *alias Sly, Deceitful, Underhand, &c.*

It is related of a very cunning fox that he once saw some ducks swimming in a river that greatly tempted his appetite, but how to reach them was the question; but this he soon solved by detaching several branches from the trees at some distance up the stream, and then sending them floating down the current. By degrees the ducks became used to them, and took no notice of their approach. When the deceitful creature saw that he had gained his purpose, he

succeeded in launching a branch large enough to hold his weight, and then quietly sailed into the very midst of his unsuspecting victims, and succeeded in seizing two of them before they were aware of his presence.

Now, it may be very well for foxes to behave in this cunning manner, but it is very sad when we see human beings acting in the same way. We know that Jacob was overcome by a fox of this nature when he deceived his poor old father by pretending to be his brother Esau; and in after years his sons paid him back in his own coin by bringing Joseph's coat dipped in the blood of a kid, thus leading Jacob to believe that a wild beast had killed his son; and this is often the case with those who act deceitfully.

There is an amusing fable that may illustrate this point. A fox once invited a stork to dinner, and, at the time appointed, the dinner was prepared, which consisted of broth served up in shallow plates. This prevented the poor bird obtaining but very little, while the fox disposed of almost the whole. However, when the stork gave the return dinner, she took care to have it served up in a deep vase with a narrow neck, which prevented the fox obtaining even a drop, and we must acknowledge it

served him right; and, if boys and girls act in the same way, they can but expect a like result, or even worse, for, when Ananias and Sapphira attempted to deceive the apostles by telling what is termed “half a lie,” they were struck down dead for their sin.

The next fox we will mention we might name Mr. Cruel, *alias* Unkind, Heartless, &c.

A fox once went to a hen-roost, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in obtaining an entrance through a hole in the roof, and at once set to work and cruelly killed every fowl there, although two would have been sufficient for his supper. When he had satisfied both his cruel disposition and his appetite, he endeavoured in vain to reach the hole in the roof to make his escape, but his most desperate leaps were of no avail; consequently, he had to wait till the farmer’s man came, who no sooner saw the state of affairs than he closed the door, seized a stick, and endeavoured to kill the cause of so much destruction. But the fox was not caught yet, for, watching his opportunity while the man was chasing him, he suddenly sprang upon his shoulder and thence through the hole in the roof, and was gone in a moment, greatly to the surprise and annoyance of his pursuer.

But how sad it is when a cruel disposition is seen in the young, who delight in pulling wings off flies, sticking pins through butterflies, tormenting dogs and cats, robbing the poor birds of their eggs, and in various ways punishing harmless creatures for amusement! It is related of a boy who was habitually cruel to all animals that he once caught a number of birds, and, having pulled their tongues out, let them fly again. Some years after he had several children of his own, all of whom were dumb. The poor man felt it was a retribution from God for his cruelty, and lived in misery from a guilty conscience until he was led to seek forgiveness from God for the cruelty of his boyhood.

But sometimes one child may be unkind to another, and, either for mischief or revenge, be guilty of a cruel action which he may never be able to forget. A boy once kicked his brother in anger, and he said, when grown up, “That kick has pained me for thirty years.” Remember, too, that unkind words may often give more pain, and the recollection of them may be more painful, than cruel actions. We once read of a youth who observed a very deformed man alight from a coach, and, to amuse his companions, he shouted out, “There goes old

Rattlebones ! ” He saw a lock of pain pass over the stranger’s face as the words caught his ear. In a moment after, to the boy’s surprise, he caught sight of his father going up to the afflicted person, gladly welcoming him, and leading him away to his home. It was some time before the boy dared to follow, fearing he might be recognized, which however, was not the case, as the stranger shook him heartily by the hand, and said, “ Such a fine boy was worth saving.” He then learnt that he whom he had called “ old Rattlebones ” had once saved him from being drowned when a child, and his affliction had come upon him entirely through his exposure on that occasion. He had often heard his parents speak of him, but till now had never seen him since he had been grown up. We need scarcely say he never forgave himself for his cruel and unkind words.

Amongst other foxes we might mention one as *Mr. Pride, alias Conceited, Vain, &c.* Foxes are noted for being conceited, and thinking a wonderful deal of themselves. Neither is it confined to them alone, for where is the boy or girl who does not do the same ? Some are very fond of admiring their pretty faces, charming curls, and smart dresses, while others may be as proud of the clever things they can do or say.

A little girl is reported to have once told her mother that she had heard a lady say she would some day be the belle of the town. The wise mother at once said—

“ My dear, I fear you have been eating poison ! ”

“ When, mother ? Was it in the cake ? ” said the child, turning pale.

“ No, my, dear, not in the cake, but in the words you have just heard. Remember, you may eat poison with your ears as well as with your mouth.”

Poor Absalom suffered greatly from this “ little fox ; ” and, because people so admired his comely person, handsome countenance, and beautiful hair, it so swelled him with pride that nothing could satisfy his ambition but being king instead of his godly father ; and, like most vain people, he cared not what bad means he used to obtain his end, and actually raised an army to fight against his loving parent. But doubtless, as he hung in the oak, entangled by his hair, of which he had been so proud, he bitterly lamented the course he had pursued under the influence of this “ little fox,” Pride.

Many more foxes might be mentioned that will injure both body and soul, but, lest this

paper should be too long, we leave our young readers to find out their names and the degradations they are the means of causing, and proceed to mention another thought or two in connection with the subject.

Foxes love darkness rather than light. Their homes are dark holes in the earth, and the midnight hour is that when they like best to be abroad. So it is with those who are overcome by the “little foxes” of which we have been writing. They make cowards of us, and we are unwilling that our thoughts, our words, and our actions should be brought to the light; and, like Adam and Eve in the garden, we want to hide ourselves where no eye can see, foolishly forgetting that remarkable sentence uttered by Hagar in the wilderness, “Thou God seest me,” which applies alike to the darkness of night or the sunshine at noon-day, the solitary wilderness or the crowded city.

Foxes need to be caught and killed; but this is easier said than done, as the farmer’s man proved (to whom we just now referred) who found the fox in the hen-roost; and sometimes when they are caught, they will even pretend to be dead, and will bear almost any amount of ill-usage without showing signs of life; but

once let him find his persecutors off their guard, then he is off in a moment.

How often has the writer endeavoured to capture some of those “little foxes” which have been trying to spoil his vine (body), and destroy his tender grape (soul), but they have escaped him again and again ; and sometimes, when he has hoped he had caught one, he has tried hard to destroy it, and has sometimes hoped that he has succeeded, when suddenly it has come to life again, and has manifested as much energy as ever, till, in despair, he has been ready to give up the chase ; and what has proved so difficult to the writer will not be found less easy by the reader. “Then,” say some, “what are we to do if they do so much damage, and are so difficult to get rid of ? ” Why, we must obtain some one to help us. We read in the Gospel of John that Jesus said, “I am the true vine ;” and oh, how hard that great fox Satan tried to destroy Jesus ; but he failed in the attempt. Now, Jesus says of His people, “Ye are the branches ;” and, if we are amongst these branches, we shall look to Jesus to help us to conquer both the great fox and all his “little foxes ;” and unless we obtain His help, we shall never succeed, for the Scripture declares, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

No doubt some of our readers will find it difficult even to understand our meaning, but we should rejoice if this mystery should lead them to search their Bibles, and upon their knees to seek earnestly of the Lord for that wise and understanding heart which He bestowed upon Solomon, which led him to write amongst other wise sayings, “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.”

Of foxes then beware,
Although they be but small ;
They track our footsteps everywhere,
And aim our final fall.

The young, the old, the brave,
Dare not these foes despise ;
Without His help who came to save
They fall, no more to rise.

Great Saviour, help, we pray ;
Bestow Thy holy fear,
That we may walk in wisdom's way,
And hold Thy truth most dear.



YOUNG TIMOTHY.

“From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.”

2 TIMOTHY iii. 15.

WE can but look upon this godly youth as one of the most interesting characters of the New Testament, in many ways bearing a striking resemblance to the child Samuel of the Old Testament. Their young lives yield a sweet fragrance, and set forth a bright example that cannot fail to benefit all that seek to follow in their footsteps.

Timothy is not a name that boys love to have for their own; but of this we are certain—they do not possess one with a better meaning,

even if it sounds better to their ears. Timothy signifies “*honoured of God*.” Those who are honoured by the Queen feel very proud, and are never tired of telling their friends about it; and their good fortune is sometimes greatly envied by those who do not possess the favour of royalty.

When wicked Haman was asked, “What shall be done with the man whom the king delighteth to honour?” he said, “Let him be clothed in the king’s apparel, ride on the king’s horse, and wear the royal crown upon his head; and let one of the most noble princes lead him through the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.”

But what a bubble is the favour of kings, even if their favourites do attain to the pinnacle of earthly glory, so much coveted by Haman! What said Wolsey, when banished in disgrace from the court where for many years honours and riches had been showered fast and thick upon him? Behold the broken-hearted old man in his banishment. Listen to his tremulous words as they fall from his lips: “If I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my king, He would not have forsaken me in my grey hairs.” No earthly honours

fell to the lot of young Timothy, but he obtained what is far better—the honour of the King of kings, whose favours are eternal, whose crowns never fade, and whose joys are “unspeakable and full of glory.”

He was honoured by having a godly mother and grandmother. Those people who live in the higher ranks of society are very proud of their ancestry, especially if they can trace it back to some notable person; but, however great may be the honour of belonging to a family that came to England with William the Conqueror, or to be descended from some celebrated warrior or philosopher, it is nothing to the honour conferred on Timothy and on those who, like him, are descended from godly parents. True, there are not many children who think so; and some are naughty enough to wish their parents were not quite so strict and particular.

There was a little boy who once thought this, especially when a travelling circus visited the town where he lived; and, when he saw the gay pictures upon the walls, gazed on the procession passing through the streets, and heard from his companions the wonderful things that were to be seen there, his little heart burned with desire to go and see it too; but when his request to go

was met at home with a “*Decidedly not!*” he thought it very hard, and wished his parents were like those of other boys. He thought it hard also to be punished when he acted wrong, as he once did when he took some fruit from a dish in the cupboard, and at another time when he kicked his brother in a temper. He thought it hard also to be obliged to go to a place of worship when other boys went into the fields; but how thankful has he since been to his parents for endeavouring to train him up in the way he should go.

If a garden is allowed to run to waste and grow as it likes, we cannot expect any fruit or flowers; but with one properly tended, and the blessing of God resting upon it, we expect something more; and so it has been with this little boy. While some of his companions have gone very wrong, he has had many times to look back with wonder, while his heart has ascended with gratitude to Heaven for the good he has received through a parent’s example, counsel, love, and prayers.

Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures “from a child.” In those days they had not quite so much of the Bible as we have, neither could they read it so easily, as, printing not having been invented, it could only be had in writing.

Copies of the Scriptures were not only scarce, but very expensive. Indeed, so recently as the reign of Edward I., the cost of a Bible was thirty-seven pounds; and, as a labourer in those days only earned three-halfpence per day, it would have taken him fifteen years to purchase a copy of the Scriptures.

Timothy's good mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, did their utmost to store his young mind with the precious truths of God's Word, so that he might carry them in his memory, which was far better than if they had been able to give him a Bible to carry in his pocket. Bibles in these days are so plentiful that but few rightly value them. It is cheering, therefore, when we meet with some who do.

We have read of a poor blind girl who had to support herself with hard work. She had a copy of some parts of the Scriptures given her, especially prepared for the blind. The skin on her fingers being so thick, it prevented her making the progress she desired. She therefore pared the skin off the tips of her fingers; but, to her dismay, it grew thicker than before. In her despair she clasped the precious Word and pressed it to her lips, when, to her great joy, she found she could read with her lips.

She at once set to work, and never rested till she had in this way learnt the whole of St. Mark's Gospel.

We wish that all were as anxious to know the contents of God's Word.

If any relative dies and leaves a will, how anxiously that will is read and listened to by all who think their name is likely to be there! The Bible is God's Will to man, and contains something worthy the notice of young and old. Then search it, young friends, and see what God has written there for you.

Some good men have spent a long life in searching the Bible, and have found wonderful treasures therein, and yet have confessed that all they had discovered was only a small portion of the riches therein contained.

Do you like history, travels, poetry, lives of good and bad men, stirring stories of adventures by sea and land? Read them in the Bible. Do you want a guide, counsellor, and friend? Find it in the Bible. Yea, in this Book can be found the sweetest honey, the richest treasures, and the purest joys. Why do not all men think so? Because their eyes are blinded through unbelief and sin. But Timothy knew and loved them because God had made him *wise unto salvation*. All who

are favoured with the same wisdom are led first to feel their need of salvation, and then are led to seek for it by prayer and reading of God's Word; and all who truly seek shall surely find. Should this meet the eye of a seeking soul, we would earnestly encourage such an one to "follow on to know the Lord," for "in due time you shall reap if you faint not."

"*From a child*" Timothy knew the Scriptures. How beautiful is the spring of the year! The primrose, the crocus, and the violet, showing their pretty faces after the long, cold, dreary winter, seem almost more lovely than the full-blown flowers of summer. So does it cheer one's heart to see some like Samuel and Timothy in the spring-time of life, in the primrose of their days, seeking their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Then there was good Abijah, who had "some good thing in his heart toward the Lord God of Israel." He was hidden away like a little violet in the wicked court of Jeroboam; but God's eye was upon him even there. We love spring flowers, and often wonder how many such will read these pages. Some, we hope, there may be who, like the crocus, lift up their heads, boldly testifying by their example to

their friends and companions that they are seeking the Lord, and, like the primrose, are yielding a sweet fragrance by their lives ; but we doubt not that, as a rule, seeking ones are most like the violet, and love to get in secret that they may bow the head, while they weep and pray to the God of Heaven, longing and pining for His mercy.

“ These pinings prove that Christ is near,
And testify His grace ;
Call on Him with unceasing prayer,
And He will show His face.”

In after life Timothy was honoured by being the friend and companion of the Apostle Paul, and he also became a preacher of the Gospel. What greater honour could he have than to be loved by such a man as Paul, and by being appointed one of God’s ambassadors upon earth ? True, the wicked and those great in the earth despised him, but God and His people loved him ; and this he coveted far more than riches, fame, or mirth, believing the truth of that promise, “ They that turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars for ever and ever.”



THE WORK OF THREE GIANTS:
The Pride of Absalom, the Passion of Cain, and the Field of the Slothful.



G I A N T S.

IDARESAY all my readers are acquainted with that very silly story called "Jack the Giant-Killer," and have, I hope, sense enough to know that such horrible giants never existed, and that the celebrated Jack is as fabulous as the giants ; but in the Bible we have a true and interesting story of David killing a giant, which narrative is always a great favourite with young folks—and well it may be, for seldom do we hear or read of such noble deeds.

Let us picture the scene in a few words. Here comes a ruddy youth to fight with a giant nearly twelve feet high, clothed with a coat of

mail weighing nearly one hundred and ninety pounds. In his hand he carries a gigantic spear like a weaver's beam. His head is covered with a helmet of brass, while a massive sword swings at his side. David, on the other hand, has no armour to cover him, and no spear or sword to protect himself with ; but instead he takes a simple sling and bag, in which he carries five carefully-chosen stones. Well might the giant despise the look of such a youthful opponent, and expect an easy victory, for he knew nothing of that mighty God who had previously delivered this youth out of the mouth of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, and who, David felt sure, would deliver him from the hand of this terrible Philistine ; so, with a firm trust in his God, forward he runs, puts a stone in his sling, and hurls it at his foe. Forth went the pebble, guided by the Lord, and sinks into the giant's forehead, who drops to the ground as helpless as a babe ! Truly, "'twas a famous victory ! "

Would not all my young friends like to be giant-killers, and do such brave acts as this ? Well, there are giants on the earth still, and some that are very hard to conquer, but those who are victorious over them are worthy to be numbered with the brave, for " He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."

The first we have to mention is *Giant Sloth*, and of him I would have you specially beware, for he does more mischief than you may think. Idle boys and girls generally make lazy men and women, and if your hands are not employed with what is good, you will probably find the truth of that couplet—

“ Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do.”

In the Book of Proverbs, we find that Solomon knew one of Giant Sloth’s prisoners, and went to look at his field, which, instead of being full of corn, was all overgrown with thorns, thistles, and briars, which this poor sluggard was too lazy to pull up; neither had he taken the trouble to plough his ground, or keep in repair the wall or fence around it; therefore, when harvest-time came, and the industrious farmers were rejoicing over their plenteous crops, this poor sluggard had to beg of them a piece of bread to keep him from starving. Solomon says he learnt a lesson from this sad sight, and so I trust that an idle boy or girl will teach you a lesson, not to be like them, but to be very unlike them. You will do well to copy the busy little ant, “ who, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth

her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest."

The late Lord Brougham was such an industrious man that Sydney Smith once said he should limit him to do only as much work as nine strong men could manage ; and what he did was done so well that it was remarked, if he had been only a shoebblack, he would never have rested till he had become the best in England ; so what your hands find to do, do it with all your might. If it is only to learn your lessons, nurse the baby, go on an errand, wash up the tea-things, or help father and mother in a hundred different ways, let no one do it better or more willingly than you. This, and this only, is the way to conquer Giant Sloth, for there is no stone you can throw at him with which he is sooner overcome than the stone of *industry*.

Giant Falsehood is also a very bad fellow—in fact, he is the offspring of Satan, who is a liar, and is called in the Bible, "the father of lies." How many boys and girls are under the power of this giant ! They do some wrong or wicked action, and try to hide what they have done by telling an untruth.

" Thus he that does one fault at first,
And lies to hide it, makes it two."

When once anyone is found out it is long before they can be again trusted, and all they may say, even if speaking the truth, is looked upon with suspicion ; but, sad to say, there are some liars that get so hardened, and speak their falsehoods so boldly, that truthful people are often deceived, and think it impossible they can be lying. Thus they succeed in deceiving their fellow-creatures ; but, alas ! they forget that it is impossible to escape the piercing glance of One above.

“ Almighty God, Thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
Quite open to Thy sight.

“ There’s not a sin that we commit,
Nor idle word we say,
But in Thy dreadful book ‘tis writ
Against the judgment day.”

There is another form of lying which is very prevalent, and which many think there is no harm in. For instance, a boy may be eating an apple or an orange, when he may be met by a companion, who asks him how many he has, to which he replies, “ I have got one,” and hides the fact that he has also more than one, lest his companion should ask for it. We find how angry God is with such sinners, for

Ananias and Sapphira were both struck dead for committing this sin. They told Peter their land had been sold for so much money, which it certainly *had*, but for how *much more* they omitted to state; therefore, whenever our readers are tempted to speak in this way, we hope they will remember it is indeed lying, and endeavour, whenever they talk of anyone or anything, to speak the *truth*, the *whole truth*, and *nothing but the truth*, as faithful witnesses do in a court of justice.

This giant also takes the form of exaggeration, therefore look after him in every shape. Mind not only what you say of anyone, but the manner in which you say it, that you do not leave a false impression upon the mind of the person you are talking to; for, depend upon it, truth will leak out sooner or later, as it did in olden time about Gehazi:—

“ Elisha’s servant told a lie
In hopes to gain some gold ;
He knew his master was not nigh,
And thought he’d ne’er be told.

“ But God with great displeasure sees
The money thus procured,
And for his sin a sad disease
He all his life endured.”

We are also told in God’s Word that liars

can never enter Heaven, but must have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; therefore, when you see or feel this giant trying to cast you down, try to conquer him by the *stone of truth*.

Giant Profane makes many victims, and sometimes one shudders to hear even the young polluting their lips with vile and filthy language. This is one of the most useless of sins, and therefore one of the most abominable, because it is sinning for the sake of sinning against that holy God who has said, “Swear not at all.”

Giant Disobedience gets hold of most young people, teaching them to disobey their parents. One of the Commandments says, “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land;” therefore that command of the Lord is always broken when they are disobedient to their parents’ wishes. Many serious calamities have befallen children through their listening to the arguments of this wicked giant. This is the reason the wise man so often gives this counsel, to which take heed: “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” But this giant does the most mischief in persuading his captives to disobey the Lord, whose Word

ought to be our law. God says, "Thou shalt not steal;" but this giant, who prevailed on Achan to take the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, often prevails on boys and girls to take what is not their own. At first it may only be sugar out of mother's sugar-basin, jam out of the cupboard, or a halfpenny that lies loose on the mantelshelf; but little beginnings often make great endings, and so little pilferers frequently become great thieves. Another of God's laws is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." How many there are who care nothing for the Sabbath day, except to break it! Probably they begin by forsaking the Sabbath school to join some evil companions, who were going for a walk in the fields; then soon came pleasure-trips, bathing, boating, with their attendant evils of smoking, drinking, and loose conversation, which things have often led to a sudden death, or to the committal of some sin that has brought a terrible punishment. These few hints as to the misery which is caused by this old giant I trust will lead my young friends always to throw at him the *stone of obedience*.

Giant Passion leads his victims to do many cruel things which, when he is out of the way, we should shudder to contemplate. How little

perhaps you think, when in a temper, that some day your passion may so master you that you may become a murderer !

“ Cain once perhaps might start
At what he soon would be ;
So they who trust an evil heart
May prove as vile as he.

“ Oh, for a holy fear
Of every evil way !
That we may never venture near
The paths that lead astray.”

Giant Pride is very busy amongst young and old, rich and poor. Some are proud of their dress, others of their looks, others of their riches, others of their wisdom, &c.; but God can take all these things from you in a moment, and lay your pride as low in the dust as He did that of poor Absalom, when left by his mule hanging to an oak by that beautiful hair of which he had been so proud. How true it is that “pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”! The *stone of humility* is the safest one to throw at this giant; for, as Bunyan says—

“ He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride ;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide.”

Giant Unbelief does more mischief than all the giants already mentioned put together. How busy he was just before the flood, when Noah was building the ark and telling the wicked people of that terrible calamity which was soon to come upon them ! But Giant Unbelief persuaded them to believe the flood would never come ; and when year after year rolled by without its coming, they felt perfectly sure the giant was right, and Noah was wrong ; but soon they were undeceived, for when the ark was finished, and all the animals that were to be saved with Noah and his family were safely housed, and the Lord had shut them in, then the miser with his gold, the drunkard at his wine, the pleasure-taker at his revels, the thief with his ill-gotten gains, with a host of other sinners, felt their faces pale with terror and their bodies tremble with fear, for they saw the heavens grow black as night. The awful lightning flashed, and the thunders rolled with crash upon crash ; the fountains of the deep burst their bounds, and the rain poured down from the heavens in torrents. Vain was it for them to take refuge in their houses, climb the highest trees, or clamber to the mountain summit, for the waters rose higher and higher till all were covered, and no living creature remained upon

the earth, except those that were sheltered in the ark. No doubt many a lamentation went up from these poor drowning creatures because they had listened to Giant Unbelief instead of the Word of God, spoken by Noah ; but then it was too late. The only door of refuge had been shut by God Himself.

Readers, take warning, for this giant is still as busy as ever, trying to persuade you that the Bible is not true, and the judgments therein threatened will never come to pass; but heaven and earth must pass away before the smallest portion of God's Word can fail, and none will be safe in the day of God's vengeance but those washed in the blood of Jesus.

“ Oh, how blest is he or she
Who to Jesus longs to flee !
He’s the Hope of Israel still ;
He to save has power and will.”

Almost last, but not least, is *Giant Satan* ; in fact, he is the master of all the other giants—or, rather, all the other giants are Satan in disguise, who can turn himself into any shape he pleases, as he did when he tempted Eve in the form of a serpent. Oh, boys and girls, Satan is indeed a terrible giant, “ going up and down seeking whom he may devour ” ! He devoured Absalom as Giant Pride, Achan as Giant Dis-

obedience, and Cain as Giant Passion. Beware less he devour you also. David fought Giant Goliath with a sling and stone, and there is only one sling and stone that can conquer Satan. Prayer is the sling, and truly there is no other weapon so powerful in the world. Hezekiah slew 185,000 of his enemies through using this sling. Prayer has opened prison doors, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and raised the dead to life; therefore prayer is the sling with which to overcome Satan.

But a sling is useless without a stone to place in it, and the Bible tells us of a remarkable one. It is called a *Corner Stone* and a *Tried Stone*, which is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He has conquered Satan, and He alone can do it.

May all my readers be taught by the Lord how to use this wonderful sling and stone, and thus obtain a glorious victory over sin and Satan; then will they be able to meet *Giant Death* without fear, like David did, who said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for God is with me." But if, on the other hand, you live and die under the power of Giant Satan, you will be for ever banished from the presence of God to dwell with him whose willing servant you have been.

